



ROYAL GAZETTE.

[SUPPLEMENT.]

FREDERICTON, NEW BRUNSWICK, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1842.

Extract from a Report of JOHN RICHARDS, Esquire,
a Commissioner of Enquiry into the state of the
North American Provinces—1830.

NEW BRUNSWICK.

Having accomplished most of my duties at Quebec, I proceeded (August 30th) for *New Brunswick* by the Grand Portage. The Road through Beaumont, St. Valeurs, St. Isles, &c. to Kamouraska, is excellent; the ride upon a natural terrace along the banks of the noble St. Lawrence, through a dense street like Settlement, is beautiful. The land in general is worked almost to exhaustion, crops poor, and apparently yielding a scanty subsistence for the population. On the North side of the River the hills or mountains are cultivated; not so on the South, where the country is mostly low, and the hills towards the end of our journey sterile. A change of climate for the worse is evident in this short distance. At St. Andre the River (St. Lawrence) is seventeen miles across. We then left it, (Sept. 1st) and passed through some Lake Settlements, —all from reclaimed swamps,—for five or six miles, to the River De Loup. This was a frosty morning; the potatoe fields were all black, their tops being killed; * much of the wheat also was green. The River De Loup, when its waters are swollen by the melting of the snow, may be a considerable Stream, but when we passed over the Bridge, it appeared reduced to forty one yards wide, and not knee deep. The next River was a much smaller one—the Green River—about eight or ten miles from the St. Lawrence, into which both these Streams run; and the next we arrived at was a trifling Stream also, the St. Francis, about fifteen miles from the St. Lawrence, running towards the South. I have been particular in these remarks, because we were then upon the Disputed Territory.

This Portage is about thirty six miles over: we passed it easily before sunset: the Roads, though bad, better than I expected. There were two or three high mountains, much swamp, a greater part of it a complete bed of rocks, and on the whole way through the woods offering very little encouragement for settlement.

The Tamiscouta Lake is about thirty miles long, but we only completed about half of it. The land is in general inferior, but on the Western side were several swells of good land. Not above three or four Settlements visible. The Madawaska River is the outlet of the Lake; the whole of which, about thirty miles, we descended. This River is about thirty or forty yards wide, a quick current, and its banks in general capable of cultivation; but they were in much fear of frost, as the wheat was in the milk.

The autumn sowed wheat is always winter killed,† and they are therefore obliged to sow their grain in the Spring, as early as possible, which is frequently done upon a winter fallow, without a second ploughing, and harrowed in while only a thin surface is thawed. Thus their wheat ripens earlier.

We stopped at the Madawaska Settlement upon the St. John's, and somewhere hereabouts we came within the old limits of
NEW BRUNSWICK.

This Settlement was composed of the Acadians who left Nova Scotia before the Revolutionary War, and have now increased to between 700 and 800 souls‡. They occupy in straggling houses for fifteen or eighteen miles upon the River. The land is fine, but as may be expected, they are full a century behind. They have no Roads, and maintain all intercourse by canoes. They have a Church and a (Catholic) Priest, who takes his tithes of 1-20th the produce in grain and potatoes, he has taken the latter as the grain crops failed repeatedly.

* This is usually the effect of the early frosts, but the crops are uninjured, and late green crops are cultivated for fodder.

† Not if proper precautions are taken; but good crops are obtained by sowing this grain on the snow in March.

‡ By the Population Returns of 1840, the numbers are stated at 3963.

We passed the portage at the Great Falls, about seventy feet perpendicular, and the whole rapid rather dangerous; in a few miles from which the River and Land on each side improved fast.

It is a gradual emergency from the wilderness, and the first settler is seen, only here and there is a miserable log house, then more frequent, next houses with the addition of barns, and so on in the scale of civilization, gradually rising until we witnessed the improved villa, and arrived at Fredericton, the capital of the Province.

The valley through which this noble stream flows is mostly of very excellent land, and capable of maintaining a large and dense population. The River itself of the second character of the American Rivers, but it has many rapids and a great proportion of quick water. It is interspersed with many valuable Islands of uncommon richness, sometimes narrowing to less than a quarter of a mile, and again expanding to a great width: distance from the Madawaska Village to Fredericton, about 180 miles, which we went in canoes, and arrived the fifth morning from the Tamiscouta Lake.

The superficial contents of the Province are about 16,500,000 acres, and that the Crown has not disposed of above 2,000,000, so that if from the remaining 14½ millions we deduct 25 per cent. as unimprovable, which may be considered a large allowance, there would remain about 10,775,000 not opened, and available for settlement. To which might be added also about 250,000, considered as revertable to the Crown, in case the process of escheat were resorted to, making in the whole about 11 millions of acres.* Here then is a large and compact body of Land accessible by sea on two sides of the Province, each containing many harbours, some excellent, intersected with Rivers and Streams in all directions, so that there is not a single point in the Province more than ten miles from a running Stream, communicable with the Ocean. The Rivers and Seas abounding with the finest fish in perfect profusion, the forest producing an inexhaustible supply of fine Timber, and the climate, though severe, remarkable for longevity, and the appearance of the inhabitants indicating great strength and muscular power; and yet as a place of resort of the host of Emigrants of late years leaving their native shores, the Province of New Brunswick has been totally overlooked, at least no provision has been made for their reception, and of the arrivals averaging for the last three years at the two ports of Saint John and Saint Andrews, (about 3000† annually,) a very great proportion have gone to the United States. They shew a yearly diminution in fact, while in Canada there is a vast increase, a certain evidence that few remain as occupiers of the soil, because among those going to Canada, it is continually found that they come out by the advice of friends previously emigrated.

The quantity of Land surveyed is about 200,000 acres, the size of a township preferred is 15 miles square, which would make it about 144,000 acres; a size as it appears to me most inconveniently large. Nothing can be more inconvenient also than the manner in which the County lines have been drawn, as will hereafter be found out, but as they are not surveyed, I hope they may not be considered permanent. In the early stages of society the County business causes much movement to the seat of Government, for the Legislature and other purposes, which they regard at first more than County convenience; but when they settle fast, and a shire town is wanted, compactness, and the shortest distance to it, is indispensable. If the lines are run by the cardinal points of the compass, it is well for the Township line also to conform to them, and in fact the County lines, as far as they go, will then serve for Township lines, and save the expense of twice running.‡

* By the latest Returns, (1842) the ungranted lands are estimated at 14 millions, and the granted lands 3½ millions of acres.

† Latterly from 8,000 to 10,000, annually.

‡ This is proved by the Settlements along the North line from the head of the Saint Croix, the only meridional line which has been drawn in the Province.